

LEHI PIONEER MONUMENT

Constructed: 1908

location: 100 North Center

Present owner: Lehi City Corporation

Early Lehi settlers experienced few difficulties with local Native Americans until 1853. Mormon Church president, Brigham Young, in the fall of that year warned all communities throughout Utah Territory to “fort up.” Lehi residents moved approximately sixty cabins to form a hollow enclosure. The north outer wall was three rods (almost fifty feet) north of Main Street. The west wall was three rods west of Third West. The south was midway between Second and Third South. The east was midway between Center and First West.

On 17 February 1854 the city council voted to erect an eight-foot high adobe wall surrounding the fort. Before they could begin this project, their plans were changed by the unexpected May 29 arrival of Brigham Young.

During meetings with the saints, Governor Young, Wilford Woodruff, and Heber C. Kimball argued for building a larger fort wall than the citizens had envisioned. The fortification was started the following day in order to take advantage of the storm-dampened soil.

Bishop David Evans, using a pocket compass and a carpenter’s square, first directed a surveying of the city at this time. This survey, which included the log fort, resulted in a plat containing sixteen blocks, each twenty rods (330 feet) square, intersected by streets six rods (ninety-nine feet) wide. A street was planned to circle the outermost tier inside the wall. It was eight rods wide, excepting the southern street (Third South), which was only five rods wide.

Not every man in the community could see the advantage of this enclosure. Building the wall with wooden spades was difficult work. Wooden forms were first put into place. Then a foot of wet clay was tamped between these planks. As the clay began to dry the forms were moved higher and another layer of mud added. To obtain one of the 128 lots inside the fort’s perimeter, each man in the

community was required to build four rods (sixty-six feet) of wall or pay the equivalent--sixty bushels of wheat or sixty dollars.

While not rivaling the Great Wall of China, the Lehi fort wall was immense. Twelve feet in height in some sections, the 7,425 feet of wall had a bottom thickness of six feet tapering upward to three feet at the top. Portholes for shooting through were designed eight feet from the ground and a rod apart.

For additional protection watchtowers were located at each of the following intersections: Second West and First North; First South and Fourth West; Third South and Second West; and Center and Second South. Entrance to the walled city could be gained only through immense gates at the intersections of First North and Third West; Second South and Fourth West; Third South and First West, and Main and Center.

After the 1858 arrival of the Utah Expeditionary Force in Cedar Valley, the need for a protective bastion in Lehi was eliminated. Much of the immense adobe wall was dismantled or leveled. In 1905 the last remaining section of the barrier was demolished.

Historian Andrew Fjeld initiated the formation of a committee to erect a monument commemorating the celebrated structure. The Elias Morris Company of Salt Lake City designed the structure. The contract for the stone work was given to local stonemason Arthur Bradder. The base was made of Utah Granite, and the shaft of Vermont granite. The sixteen-foot-high completed work had two polished surfaces, one containing a map of the fort wall, and the other inscribing a brief history of the settlement.

Dedicatory services for the \$650 Pioneer Monument were held on Thanksgiving Day, 26 November 1908. The monument remained on the original site until December 1932, when it was moved one block east onto the Carnegie Library property, when First north between Center and First West was closed

The Lehi Historical Preservation Commission is currently making plans to place an interpretative marker near the site.